



“Emotional day” as NZ lifts cruise ban

MORE than two years of pent-up frustration was washed away yesterday as New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern confirmed that the current ban on foreign cruise ships in NZ waters would lift at 11.59pm on 31 Jul (**CW** breaking news).

Debbie Summers, Chairman of the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA), told **CW** “it’s an emotional day here”, with the reopening of maritime borders coming after several false starts.

NZCA issued a formal statement, with Summers saying the news that cruise ships will be permitted to return to Aotearoa’s waters without restrictions “has been greeted with a sense of cautious optimism and relief”.

“The Prime Minister’s announcement that the maritime border will reopen without added restrictions means cruise lines can start confirming port calls and

preparing ships with certainty.

“New Zealand is an important destination for cruise lines, and with worldwide demand for cruising strong again, combined with excellent regional dispersal, this sector ticks every box for value,” Summers said.

“After two years of hardship, hundreds of Kiwi ship suppliers and tourism operators can start rebuilding their businesses back, helping communities that have suffered during our pandemic years and begin preparing with confidence to provide our top service to cruise visitors.”

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia MD Joel Katz also hailed the reopening, saying it was a “huge breakthrough for the many New Zealanders who depend on cruise tourism, including travel agents, tour operators, food and produce providers, port workers and many

other industry suppliers”.

“The suspension of international cruising over the past two years has had a huge impact on the New Zealand travel industry and we now have an opportunity to work on a revival,” he added.

One of the first cruise lines to respond to the reopening was Celebrity Cruises, with regional MD Tim Jones saying the news will see *Celebrity Eclipse* set sail in local waters, including several trans-Tasman itineraries, effective from 22 Oct.

He said the NZ Government’s announcement represented a return to normality for the cruise industry, travel and tourism.

“We always knew that someday we would showcase the wonders of this region from our luxury ships once more,” Jones said.

“We’re thrilled that ‘someday’ has arrived, and soon, so will *Celebrity Eclipse*,” he added.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news

Oceania demand

MORE than 60% of capacity on Oceania Cruises’ new 35-day circumnavigation voyage of Australia in late 2023 was sold within 24 hours of the launch of the company’s 2024 Collection (**CW** 05 May).

The program’s release saw the opening day ranking among the best single-day booking periods in the company’s history, according to CEO Howard Sherman.

All of the 2023 and 2024 bookings from the collection are new, cash reservations, with no dilution from Future Cruise Credits, with Oceania saying it continues to see “strong demand from new-to-brand guests”.



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MSC great escape!

MSC Cruises has launched a sale on Caribbean voyages, offering savings of up to 20% on cruise fares plus a range of value adds.

The Great Caribbean Escape campaign features departures aboard *MSC Seashore* from Miami or *MSC Divina* out of Cape Canaveral, with prices starting at just A\$814/NZ\$899 for a seven night *Seashore* voyage ex Miami on 17 Sep 2022.

This cruise calls at San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie in the US Virgin Islands; Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic and Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve in the Bahamas, with the absolute bargain fare including an Easy Drinks package, wi-fi and US\$50 onboard credit for the first two passengers per cabin.

On top of that, children up to 17 years cruise free with included drinks - for info call 1300 027 502 (AU) or 0508 4278 473 (NZ).

Princess add-on

PRINCESS Cruises has launched a new "Princess Premier" premium add-on package, offering a range of amenities such as unlimited wi-fi for up to four devices, top-shelf beverages, specialty dining, photos and gratuities.

Priced at US\$75 per person per day, the line says the bundle offers savings of more than 50% compared to buying the elements separately.

It's an enhancement to the popular Princess Plus add-on, with the line's President, John Padgett, saying "guests have overwhelmingly embraced the convenience and value offered in Princess Plus, so we are adding Princess Premier to take our inclusivity options to the next level".

He said over 50% of guests currently take up Princess Plus.

A tough job, but it has to be done...



AS EXCITEMENT builds towards P&O's first domestic cruise in more than two years, the team onboard *Pacific Explorer* have turned their attention to the tricky task of taste testing.

With an array of new dishes on the menu, the restaurant crews are "sampling the taste, and very importantly, the

vibrant looks" of the culinary delights which guests will soon experience aboard the ship.

They're **pictured** attacking the task with gusto, gearing up to serve thousands of meals each day in the ship's main Waterfront restaurant alongside specialty eateries such as Angelo's and Dragon Lady plus The Pantry.

Transparent Hurtigruten

HURTIGRUTEN Cruises has released its annual ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) report, confirming the group's commitment to achieving new science-based targets.

CEO Daniel Skjeldam (**pictured**) said the report highlighted the need to make emissions reductions the number one goal for travel companies, calling for greater transparency from the industry - especially from cruise ship operators.

"We operate in an industry which negatively impacts the environment, so we have a collective responsibility to be more transparent and accountable when it comes to our natural and social impact.

"Sustainability is not a marketing exercise; it's a core part of our business," he said.

"It's a licence to operate and, more importantly, it's the right thing to do."

Key achievements highlighted in the Hurtigruten report include the launch of its third battery-hybrid ship, *MS Otto Sverdrup*, while sister vessel *MS Fridtjof Nansen* was named the world's most sustainable ship by Scope ESG and *Stern Magazine*.

The company's Norwegian coastal division initiated "Europe's most environmental fleet upgrade" to reduce emissions from its fleet by 25%, while a new partnership between Hurtigruten Svalbard and Volvo Penta will see the development of its first hybrid day cruise vessel.

"I'm extremely proud of our colleagues, both at land and sea, for achieving many ESG successes



despite operating in a pandemic.

"We have been a first mover on sustainability for decades, and we'll continue to be a catalyst for change towards a greener travel industry - to protect what we love today, tomorrow and into the future," Skjeldam added.

The report also reiterates Hurtigruten Group's strong intentions towards sustainable travel going forward, with the planned launch of the first zero emission ship on the Norwegian coast by 2030 (*CW* 01 Apr), a transition to fully carbon neutral operations by 2040, and ultimately for the company to become completely emissions free by 2050.

Skjeldam said the targets were core components of Hurtigruten's long-term business strategy, intended to create value for investors in the business.

The Hurtigruten ESG report can be viewed by **CLICKING HERE**.

Bubbly Creative

CREATIVE Cruising has launched an exclusive incentive for sales of Ponant and Paul Gauguin cruises, with all advisors who make bookings by 31 May 2022 to receive a bottle of Champagne.

The deal is valid on Tahiti, Kimberley and Antarctic voyages plus more, such as the new and exclusive 13-night 'Fly and Cruise' package for the 2022 Chairman's Cruise aboard *Le Paul Gauguin* - for more details call 1300 362 599.

Pandaw bonus

PANDAW Cruises is celebrating the removal of most travel restrictions in Vietnam and Cambodia by offering "enhanced commission" on lower Mekong sailings for 2022/23.

All registered agents will receive an additional 10% payout on top of their standard rate for a selection of voyages, for bookings made before 31 Dec.

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Travel Daily




PORTHOLE

FORGET Harrison Ford - the true "Indiana Jones of the Deep" has been announced as a guest speaker aboard several Cunard Line voyages over the coming months.

Mensun Bound made global headlines earlier this year (*CW* 10 Mar) when he discovered Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance* beneath the ice of Antarctica, where it had lain for more than 100 years.

Fresh from his frozen exploits, the now renowned maritime archaeologist will join *Queen Mary 2* in Southampton for a 7-night transatlantic crossing on 24 Jun, while next year he will also present aboard *Queen Elizabeth* on a 13-night voyage from Alaska to San Francisco.

Bound, who is from Oxford University, is Trustee of the Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust, and headed up a "team of crack deep-ocean robotic technologists" which discovered *Endurance* 3km under the ice.

Cunard noted that the shipboard lectures will be the first public presentations by Bound since he returned from his historic expedition, and will reveal how he and his colleagues "penetrated the pack to find the world's most unreachable wreck".

When the team found the ship, Bound noted that there are no wood-consuming parasites existing in the Weddell Sea, "so the wood is as fresh as the day the ship went down".

NCL blitz across the ditch



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's sales team headed across the Tasman earlier this week to celebrate the Great Cruise Comeback with NZ trade partners.

The trip included a special event on Tue at Brew on Quay in Auckland to thank the trade for their steadfast support and provide an update on the latest from Norwegian, with the timely gathering coming, as it turned out, on the antepenultimate evening prior to the huge news of NZ's cruise reopening (see p1) - which will see the newly refurbished *Norwegian Spirit* offer four sailings from Auckland between Jan and Mar 2023.

The NCL team is pictured above in Browns Bay: Angela Middleton, Senior Sales Manager AU/NZ; Damian Borg, Director of Sales AU/NZ; and Jacinta Baker, BDM for WA and NZ.



JULIA Hindman, Flight Centre NZ; Candice van den Boz, Infinity Holidays NZ; Damian Borg, NCL; and Kristin Edgeworth from 360edge Travel.



ANGELA Middleton, NCL; Richard Johnson from Go Holidays; and Michelle Halliday of Creative Cruising.

New crew freedom

CREW aboard Royal Caribbean ships are now being permitted to disembark during port visits, in another welcome sign of a return to pre-pandemic normality.

After several carefully conducted trials, the new policy was officially introduced for all ships and ports of call effective from 01 May, according to a crew newsletter.

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